

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 275 153

FL 016 051

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TITLE From Communicative Competence to Cultural Competence.
PUB DATE Mar 83
NOTE 14p.; In: Handscombe, Jean, Ed.; And Others. On TESOL '83. The Question of Control. Selected Papers from the Annual Convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (17th, Toronto, Canada, March 15-20, 1983); see FL 015 035.
PUB TYPE Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communicative Competence (Languages); *Cultural Awareness; *Cultural Education; Educational Objectives; Educational Strategies; *English (Second Language); Foreign Countries; Instructional Materials; *Interaction; *Interpersonal Competence; Second Language Instruction; Teacher Role

ABSTRACT

Growth of interest in teaching culture within English as a second language (ESL) instruction shows that the basic view of language is changing. However, development of a coherent conceptual framework for teaching culture in ESL has not kept pace with the production of culture-oriented materials. Culture learning is more complex than language learning because (1) learners may belong to groups occupying structurally different positions in society, with differential relationships to the dominant group and culture; (2) cultural rules, contrasted with linguistic rules, are often vague and framed only in terms of preferences, and (3) a homogeneous culture is often difficult to identify. Definitions of culture and culture education vary greatly, but recent work supports the concept that cultural competence and communicative competence are closely related. As a culture learner, the ESL student needs systematic presentation of the major values and norms governing everyday life; as a result techniques such as experiential culture learning, cross-cultural comparison, and viewing culture through metaphor have been suggested. The teacher's attitude toward the relevance of cultural competence is critical. What remains to be formulated is a broad concept of intercultural interactional competence that can be applied in English instruction. (MSE)

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From Communicative Competence to Cultural Competence

Harry Krasnick

The growth of interest in teaching culture within the context of English as a second language (ESL) instruction can be seen as evidence that our basic view of language itself is in the process of change. So far, however, the development of a coherent conceptual framework for the teaching of culture in ESL does not seem to have kept pace with the production of culture-oriented materials. This article highlights some background issues, discusses the concept of cultural competence as it relates to communicative competence, comments on some examples of available teaching materials, and suggests some directions which the development of cultural competence as a major goal in teaching ESL might take.

CONTEXTS OF CULTURE LEARNING

There are a variety of purposes for learning ESL, some of which may be satisfied by the acquisition of linguistic competence or communicative competence (Paulston 1974). But when interaction with native speakers of English is the goal, culture learning must accompany language learning. A number of factors make culture learning more complex than language learning.

Every discussion of culture learning must begin with the broader features of the societal context. In Canada, to take one example, the government has adopted an official policy of bilingualism and multiculturalism, seeking to promote a pluralistic society (Burnet 1975, Findlay 1975, Peter 1981). Canada's program of support for all ethnocultural groups which desire to maintain their identity is expressed in the metaphor of the cultural mosaic. This has, however, greatly complicated the questions of what it means to "Canadianize" or "integrate" newcomers (Beck 1975). At the same time, it has been shown that the position of various groups in Canadian society is far from equal, both with respect to power (Porter 1965) and in terms of social status (Berry, Kalin and Taylor 1977). A structural analysis of the sociocul-

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tural context of culture learning is suggested by Ogbu (1978), a Nigerian anthropologist, who has offered a tripartite typology of minority groups. What he calls *autonomous minorities* may be numerically smaller than the dominant group but are not subordinate economically or politically. "Members of autonomous minorities do not necessarily regard the majority group as their reference group, nor do they necessarily want to be assimilated" (1978:23). *Immigrant minorities*, as strangers, "operate outside the beliefs of an established system of social hierarchy and are not deeply affected by the ideology of superiority and inferiority that supports such a hierarchy" (24). Ogbu's third type, which he calls *caste minorities*, are regarded by the dominant group as "inherently inferior in all respects" (23). They are restricted to certain types of work, and "the least desirable roles they are forced to play are generally used to demonstrate that they are naturally suited for their low position in society" (23). While Ogbu's study was aimed at explaining the low academic achievement of minority groups in a number of different societies, there is at least one clear implication for culture learning in ESL: specifically, learners may be members of groups which occupy structurally different positions in society, resulting in relationships to the dominant group and its culture which may vary significantly.

Inter-relationships between the learner's culture or social group and the target culture are thought to be a powerful factor in second language learning (Alptekin 1981, Brown 1980, Genesee, Rogers, and Holobow 1983, Schumann 1975, 1976a, 1976b). At the psychological level, the target culture's view of the learner's culture can affect the learner's view of his or her own culture (Hall and Freedle 1975, Indra 1979, Kelly 1978, Skinner and Hendricks 1979, Wong-Rieger 1980). At the same time, one group's view of another group may be a reflection of its view of itself. Basso (1979), an anthropologist who studied Apaches living in Arizona, concluded that the variety of images of the dominant culture found among Apache groups was due to the fact that their "models of the Whiteman are consistently formulated in relation to corresponding models of the Indian" (1979:4-5).

The individual's membership in an ethnocultural group can be viewed in terms of his or her psychological self-identification with the group (Wsevolod 1981). However, others may impose a different, inappropriate membership on the individual (Beck 1975, Skinner and Hendricks 1979). This may conflict with the individual's own personal cultural identity or national origin. For instance, in Canada Sikhs may be classified as Hindus, Fijians as East Indians, and East Indians as Pakistanis. "Inappropriate reference grouping" by others obviously can affect intercultural communication in an adverse manner (Condon and Yousef 1975:7-10 and Khleif 1979). To further complicate matters, the learner may have overlapping or multiple cultural identities as well (Giles and Johnson 1981).

Race is yet another basis for social classification which may operate in culture learning. Though biological traits are clearly the foundation of racial classification systems, such systems are essentially social in nature (Ogbu 1978) and operate on a contamination theory, by which the presence of a non-white component may serve as the definitive trait in the eyes of the dominant group (for example, a child with one white and one black parent is considered non-white, not white-and-black or white-black).

Subcultural variation also exists within ethnocultural categories and is based on such factors as social class, religion, regional differences, rural-urban differences, and so on. As with race and ethnocultural membership, as discussed above, labels

applied by others may reveal far more about their particular classification systems than about the categories of membership which are meaningful to the people being described (see, for example, Skinner and Hendricks 1979). In addition, not only is the status of women often lower than that of men, but there are also considerable intracultural differences between men and women. Such differences may be greater in other places than they are in North America.

A second factor which tends to make culture learning a complex phenomenon is that cultural rules, in contradistinction to linguistic rules, are often vague and framed only in terms of preferences. This holds true for the basic values in a culture (Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961) as well as for conversational rules (Gumperz 1980, 1982a, Gumperz and Herasimchuk 1975, Sacks and Schegloff 1979). For example, Gumperz states that "at the level of conversation, there are always many possible alternative interpretations, many more than exist at the level of sentence grammar" (1982a:159). Not only are the rules themselves often quite general, but applying them in particular situations can be somewhat problematic:

The general rules or policies are norms whose meaning in emergent (constructed) action scenes must be negotiated by the actor (Cicourel 1973:29).

As a consequence,

... when we actually observe everyday social activities we find that the members of our society do not, in fact, find it easy to agree on what is right and wrong, moral and immoral, in concrete situations (J. Douglas 1970b:15).

As sociologists have shown, the interpretation of behavior in everyday life, including deviation from sociocultural rules, is a very complex phenomenon (see, for example, J. Douglas 1970a).

Yet another general factor which renders culture learning complex is that, while the purpose of including a cultural component in teaching ESL is to facilitate students' interaction in English with members of one or more speech communities (that is, cultural groups), it is not always easy to identify a homogeneous target group or culture. Specifying the target community and its culture may be comparatively easy in the case of, for example, immigrants learning ESL in New Zealand, but it may be virtually impossible in societies where English is spoken both as a first language by some groups and as an additional language by others, or where English serves as a lingua franca. Though it is inevitable that the learner will perceive the teacher as a model of one cultural group or another (Jaramillo 1973, Wolfgang 1979), the group to which the teacher belongs may not necessarily be the primary group with whom the learner intends/wishes to interact. Smith's suggestion is an interesting one.

In situations where the students are not sure where they will be using their English and have no overriding interest in any particular country, the emphasis could be placed on ways to learn about different cultures and developing a greater tolerance for differences in cultures (1978:11).

In light of the increasing use of English in intercultural and international communication in education and business, it could be argued that this approach is suitable for all ESL learners, as further discussed below.

CULTURE, COMMUNICATION, AND COMPETENCE

Culture means different things to different people. Some think of it as *good* music or *serious* drama. Others may equate culture with civilization itself, or with high social status. Most ESL students, however, have little need or desire to know how the rich manage to maintain the social distinctions between themselves and the less fortunate. Students are usually more interested in *everyday* culture. It is worth noting that this definition implies interpersonal interaction, whereas merely appreciating what some would call *the better things in life* may not. Few ESL teachers today would refer to treatises on etiquette for guidance, but the notion of culture as *worthwhile pursuits* may still persist for a time.

Another view, often found in travel books, sees culture as consisting of the history, geography, government, and interesting customs of a country. A recent intermediate level ESL/EFL textbook aimed at helping students acquire "cultural awareness and reading skills" (Kitao, Broderick, Fujiwara, Inoue, Kitao, Miyamoto, and Sackett 1983) seems to be based on this view. Nearly all of its twenty chapters are devoted to such topics as famous American cities, unusual geological formations, food customs and recipes, Anglo-American Christian practices, and popular entertainment. In contrast, only a few of the chapters treat ESL students' daily interactional needs: bus transportation (two chapters), foreign students on campus, and bilingual education. There is no objection to selecting materials which are likely to prove interesting to students, of course, but relevance is an issue.

A non-rigorous conception of culture learning ideas may result in problems for students. Two examples from books designed specifically to acquaint foreign visitors with American culture will suffice to illustrate this point: "... the United States is, in fact, markedly segmented into neighborhoods, residential areas, and ghettos; *right and wrong* sides of town" (Lanier 1978:27, emphasis added); "Used to be a real *good, solid, middle-class* neighborhood. But it's changing . . ." (Johnson 1979:3, emphasis added). This kind of moral stigmatization and categorization of people into good and bad, respectable and disrespectable (see J. Douglas 1970b and Ball 1970), is particularly lamentable because ESL learners are often members of groups likely to be so stigmatized by the dominant group.

An approach to culture which is useful in understanding interpersonal interaction and culture learning is contained in the definition offered by the anthropologist Ward Goodenough: "... a society's culture consists of whatever it is one has to know or believe in order to operate in a manner acceptable to its members . . ." (cited in Hudson 1980:74). The emphasis is on *interactional competence*, not just *general knowledge* about the target culture. For instance, taking group decision-making in North America as an example, cultural or interactional competence would refer to behavioral skills in decision-making, rather than to information about how decisions are reached in North America.

It is important to differentiate between this view and the concept of communicative competence, which is often treated as knowledge of what is conventional and what is situationally appropriate (see, for example, Holmes and Brown 1976, Hymes 1974, Paulston 1974). Teachers are likely to see the practical value of this kind of competence, but usually only in terms of the learner's ability to avoid offending or upsetting others. Such an emphasis has been called the "contrastive Emily Post approach to language teaching" (Paulston and Bruder 1976:59). However, if ESL students are to be able to interact appropriately with members of the

target culture, this type of knowledge is not enough. As the sociologist Hugh Mehan has pointed out, the concept of communicative competence based on the sociolinguistic approach is only competence for speaking, not competence for social interaction:

There is more to interaction than the production of sentences or utterances that are grammatically correct and socially appropriate on a particular occasion. Most notably, there is an interpretive as well as a productive aspect of interaction. Interaction involves the interpretation of the speech behavior and other behavior of people and the interpretation of setting features of social activities, including normative role statements (1979:132).

Another sociologist, Matthew Speier, has made a similar observation:

. . . talk is not merely sentence production, it is social exchange and social coordination. Talk is interactional. Instead of a model of language use and of a language user, we need to develop a model of interaction and of the use of interactional abilities (1973:59).

The underlying view is that language-use competence is at once *both cultural and interactional*:

Coming to an understanding of interactional competence . . . necessitates treating culture as intersubjective praxis (that is, human productive and comprehension practices) instead of either a subjective state or an objective thing. On the one hand, this means describing what people do with their cultural knowledge, how they use what they know about social structure, norms, and other people in ongoing social situations, encounters, and events. On the other hand, it means describing the active modes of human production and construction, the concrete observable *work* of people that assembles orderly social entities (Mehan 1979:130).

In other words, cultural competence refers to "the competence necessary for effective interaction" (ibid.). This approach to language and language-use competence is now beginning to be articulated in ESL (see, for example, Richards 1980), and is supported by the following three perspectives.

First, it should be acknowledged that the role of verbal language in human communication has been overemphasized (M. Douglas 1975). The bulk of what is communicated in interpersonal communication is non-linguistic in nature (Condon and Yousef 1975, Widdowson 1978, Wolfgang 1979). In real life, linguistic and non-linguistic communication are inseparably interwoven:

We alternate channels and mix sensory effects like expert technicians; we execute delicate bodily maneuvers and choreograph our gestures with the rhythmic grace of dancers; we change roles, put on and take off masks, and stage our continuous performances like the most gifted of actors (Montagu and Matson 1979:xi).

It is clear that non-verbal communicative competence is culturally determined and, in fact, as one anthropologist has asserted, culture-specific: ". . . there can be no such thing as natural behavior. Every kind of action carries the imprint of learning . . ." (Mauss, cited in M. Douglas 1973:93). Occasionally non-verbal com-

munication is included within the concept of communicative competence in ESL (see, for example, Canale and Swain 1980), but on the whole there has been comparatively little recognition of the fundamental integration of communication modes.

Second, the referential function of language continues to be greatly emphasized, the contribution of speech act theory notwithstanding. Long ago Dewey spoke of language as "fundamentally and primarily a social instrument" (cited in Seelye 1974:13), and Malinowski called it "a mode of action, and not an instrument of reflection" (cited in Hudson 1980:109). All language, as Alfred Schutz (1972:130) noted, is for some purpose, that is, it has what he called an "in-order-to" motive. Stevick (1976:128) takes the same view, defining language as "purposeful behavior between people, intertwined with other kinds of purposive behavior between the same people." This competence in everyday language use entails mastery of all kinds of complex and subtle cultural meanings. One example of what is involved in the concept of language as social action is what Goffman called "impression management":

... in everyday life it is usually possible for the performer to create intentionally almost any kind of false impression without putting himself in the indefensible position of having told a clear-cut lie. Communication techniques such as innuendo, strategic ambiguity, and crucial omissions allow the misinformer to profit from lies without, technically, telling any (1959:62).

Few ESL learners will achieve equal mastery to native speakers in this area, but the point is that realistic goals for students cannot be set without adequately conceptualizing what competence in using language in everyday settings comprises.

A third perspective which supports the view of competence in language use as cultural or interactional competence is the theory of language as the basis of social reality. The subjective approach in sociology is based on the observation that "social categories are seen as part of the outside world, along with physical surroundings, artifacts, beliefs, etc." (Gumperz 1971:222). Everyday social reality is composed of what Berger and Luckmann (1967) call "the common objectifications of everyday life," which are maintained primarily through language. "Everyday life is, above all, life with and by means of the language I share with my fellowmen" (Berger and Luckmann 1967:37). Members of the society stand in an interactive relationship with their creations, and at the heart of this ongoing activity is language:

Language is both the principal means whereby individuals externalize themselves into the objectifications that make up society and the means whereby society talks back to these individuals shaping them to its intentions (Lemert 1979:154).

Cicourel (1973) has developed a model of sociocultural competence based on an analogy to competence in language use. He sees the members of a society as having

... a sense of social structure competence necessary for tackling the performance that includes the everyday usage of a particular language and world view. Actual performance means the transformation of verbal and nonverbal materials into constructions whereby members programme each other's unfolding action (1973:71).

By way of comparison with the language-and-thought hypothesis of Sapir and Whorf, the view of language as constitutive of everyday social reality may be called the language-and-society hypothesis.

Although these propositions pertain to everyday life, they are not part of the taken-for-granted world of the everyday actor, who is generally content to rely on his commonsense stock of knowledge, typifications, and recipes. The culture learner is neither social scientist nor native member of the culture. What, then, should be his or her perspective? The culture learner may be seen to be in the same position as the language learner. The latter strives to attain the competence of the native speaker, who is not aware of the nature of her or his own competence, with the assistance of the linguist's and the teacher's insights and systematic analyses. The learner's competence eventually may turn out to be superior in some respects to the native speaker's, and inferior in others. Foreign students studying sociology in North America are in an analogous situation. While their experiential background in North American social life is limited, native-born North Americans may have little in the way of a systematic perspective on their own society or culture. As a culture-learner, the ESL student needs a systematic presentation of the major values and norms that govern everyday life.

MATERIALS

Literature continues to be a well-regarded source of insight into culture by some though its usefulness does not go unquestioned, as the following statement indicates:

The quarrel is not with the value of literature or art as a means to illustrate how the foreign people live, but rather with the restrictive inroad fiction offers as the major source of information. Since many language teachers feel uncomfortable dealing with concepts and data of the social sciences, they tend to rely too heavily on literature to teach culture. Consequently, the common dual descriptor *literature and culture* has itself become suspect: It too often means a little culture and a lot of literature (Seelye 1974:15).

The cultural content in literature is not likely to be presented systematically or explicitly. With respect to the textbook mentioned earlier, the authors state:

Girls in colonial America made samplers to practice different needlework stitches. A sampler is a decorative piece of embroidery often containing letters or verse. We named this textbook *An American Sampler* because we hope you will enjoy sampling readings about various aspects of culture and life in the United States (Kitao et al. 1983:4).

No connection is made between the content of the various chapters, nor is the content related to any underlying continuity or theme. Though it is true that the "grammar of culture" has yet to be written (Keesing 1974:78), inventories of the major value and belief systems of North American culture do exist (for example, Kluckhohn and Strodtbeck 1961, Stewart 1972); in turn such studies make possible a systematic approach to the topic.

An ESL textbook which does focus on cultural norms and values and on intercultural communication is *Beyond Language: Intercultural Communication for*

English as a Second Language (Levine and Adelman 1982). It has much to recommend it as a textbook (see Krasnick 1983) and has quickly become a popular choice, no doubt due in large part to widespread agreement with the authors' view that "programs that are solely language-oriented cannot fully assist foreign and immigrant students to understand and adapt to important cultural differences of the host country" (Levine and Adelman 1982:xi). What is more relevant, however, for the present discussion is the authors' approach to presenting cultural materials:

Although the ESL classroom lends itself to the integration of language instruction and intercultural learning, there often is only a random exposure to culture in the classroom. This text has been designed to permit a systematic and graded presentation of language and culture (ibid.).

The cultural information itself is oriented to the needs of individuals learning how to operate in a new culture; some of the exercises are adapted from intercultural training methods (see, for example, Weeks, Pedersen, and Brislin 1977, Pusch 1979). An added value of the comparative and systematic approach to culture and communication taken in this book and in the field of intercultural communication generally is that it is a simple matter to incorporate relevant data from other sources (such as the studies presented in Erickson and Shultz 1982, and Gumperz 1982b).

The ESL teacher is likely to be a native member of the culture but, like the native speaker, may not have a self-conscious awareness of her or his own knowledge. Every teacher intending to deal with cultural competence as part of the ESL curriculum should become acquainted with the salient dimensions of culture that pertain to subjective experience and especially to communication. Two sources in this area are Condon and Yousef's *An Introduction to Intercultural Communication* (1975) and Stewart's *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (1972). Condon and Yousef emphasize communication in interpersonal encounters, and take an experientially-oriented approach. Stewart offers a relatively abstract systematic treatment of American values and thought patterns, but makes extensive use of cross-cultural comparisons, which helps the reader to appreciate the distinctiveness of American culture and the reality of cross-cultural differences. Taken together, these two books offer what is probably the best currently available introduction to the aspects of North American culture which are relevant to the acquisition of cultural and interactional competence in ESL.

It is also possible to glean insights into the culture-language relationship from other types of sources, such as Lakoff and Johnson's (1980) study of metaphor. Metaphor is most often considered as part of the craft of the rhetorician; few would see it as having much to do with cultural competence other than as a type of idiomatic usage. But Lakoff and Johnson argue that the basic conceptual system of our culture is essentially metaphorical in nature, and that the fundamental metaphors have their origin in our physical and cultural experience. The metaphor of ideas as food is a striking example:

What he said *left a bad taste in my mouth*. All this paper has in it are *raw facts*, *half-baked ideas*, and *warm-over theories*. There are too many facts here for me to *digest* them all. I just can't *swallow* that claim. That argument *smells fishy*. Let me *stew* over that for a while. Now there's a theory that you can really *sink your teeth into*. We need to let that idea *percolate* for a while. That's *food*

for thought. He's a voracious reader. We don't need to *spoon-feed* our students. He *devoured* that book. Let's let that idea *simmer on the back burner* for a while. This is the *meaty* part of the paper. Let that idea *jell* for a while. That idea has been *fermenting* for years (Lakoff and Johnson 1980:46-47, emphasis in the original).

The authors believe that the important values in a culture will be coherent with the metaphorical structure of the most fundamental concepts in the culture. This relationship between metaphor and concept can be taken as an example of the linguistic constitution of social reality, as discussed above. Such insights and data can surely enrich the present ESL curriculum, and they show that the connection between language learning and cultural competence need not be obscure or elusive. The key is the recognition that our everyday knowledge does have patterns which can be learned by an outsider.

TEACHER'S ORIENTATION

It has been suggested that the average teacher may not have much insight into her or his own culture and is ethnocentric in approaching other cultures (Alptekin 1981, Bancroft 1975, Jacobson 1971, Marks and Heffernan-Cabrera 1977). Though there is no suggestion that ESL teachers are any worse in this regard than other teachers, it should be recognized that teaching cultural material does pose a challenge: emotional investment may be high, the subject matter is often outside awareness, and there is real potential for misunderstanding in intercultural communication (see Condon and Yousef 1975, Gumperz 1982b, and Erickson and Shultz 1982). Moreover, in a pluralistic or multicultural society the teacher's own culture may not represent the target behavior in the same way that his or her English does.

With an appropriate cultural orientation, most learning activities can take on a cultural dimension or aspect. Contact activities in the community offer obvious opportunities for developing cultural and interactional competence in addition to communicative (that is, sociolinguistic) competence. In the classroom, activities such as role-playing (see Donahue and Parsons 1982) and socio-drama (see Scarcella 1978) are highly suitable for acquiring cultural competence, as are real-life materials such as newspapers (Blatchford 1973). Values clarification exercises, developed originally for native speakers, can be adapted for use with ESL students (Green 1975), as can most intercultural training methods. One particular method offering great potential is the culture assimilator, an effective and convenient way of teaching individuals to make culturally appropriate interpretations or attributions of the meaning of others' behavior (Brislin 1981:101-105). Culture assimilators have been developed for Americans preparing to take up posts in a number of different foreign countries, and for individuals needing to learn about the culture of white people or of disadvantaged people within the United States. However, development of culture assimilators does require considerable effort, and although a workshop on the use of culture assimilators was held at the East-West Center at the University of Hawaii in 1983, so far no culture assimilator for ESL has been published.

Whatever method is used, the teacher's attitude toward the relevance of cultural competence is critical. In second language teaching we have witnessed a move from linguistic competence to sociolinguistic or communicative competence as the goal of

instruction, and now there is a growing awareness that communicative competence should be conceived as *intercultural* communicative competence (see Baxter, 1983). These conceptual developments are being consolidated and put into practice, but the basic concept is still that of sociolinguistic and nonverbal communicative competence, though oriented toward communication in multicultural environments. What remains to be formulated and applied is a broad concept of *intercultural interactional competence*, including knowledge of basic values and norms; verbal and nonverbal interactional competence in using English in intercultural communication; competence in using language as social action; and competence in creating and interpreting linguistic aspects of social reality.

A substantial shift in how language-use competence is viewed is implied. One cannot expect to alter one's basic orientation to language itself overnight, but it must eventually be done, because full participation in social relationships does require more than just proper sociolinguistic etiquette. As McLeod (1976:217) says, "teaching language only will leave the students social cripples." The emergence of English as the chief medium of international communication suggests that teaching intercultural interactional competence in English may well be among the most significant undertakings of the future.

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